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MARSHAL AKHROMEYEV'S

POST-INF WORLD

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MARSHAL AKHROMEYEV'S POST-INF WORLD

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The views expressed here are those of the
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MARSHAL AKHROMEEV'S POST-INF WORLD

I. MILITARY DOCTRINE AND THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF

A. Introduction

On 10 December 1987, during the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Washington, D. C., the US Joint Chiefs of Staff met in the "tank" with Marshal S. F. Akhromeev. As Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Akhromeev speaks for his institution and embodies Soviet staff culture and the underlying values of the Soviet military. The General Staff, or the "brain" of the Soviet Armed Forces, reflects a century of organizational evolution. It has comprehensively collected, analyzed, and exploited military experience to develop the terminology, method, and process associated with the preparation for and conduct of war. Within a larger Soviet context of sometimes puzzling changes in personnel and policies, the General Staff represents an important element of intellectual and structural continuity. It is from the General Staff's perspective that the following essay attempts to view the post-INF world.

An appreciation of continuity is especially appropriate at a time when the winds of change appear to dominate the Soviet scene. At times over the last decade, Soviet perceptions and thinking about a range of important military issues, including the nature of external threats, the relative imminence of war, the implications of weaponry based on "new physical principles," the centrality of national liberation struggles, the growth of

constraints on US conduct, and the nature of local wars, have reflected dramatic shifts. A new generation of officers, which reached maturity after the Second World War, has begun to attain senior rank within the Soviet Armed Forces. Its gradual emergence corresponds with the appearance on the civilian side of the generation of General Secretary M. S. Gorbachev. Both generations ostensibly espouse "new thinking," and in the wake of the XXVII Congress (1986) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), new directives mandating "restructuring" (perestroika), "openness" (glasnost'), and Party "revitalization" (demokratizatsiia) have encompassed Soviet civil society as well as the military. At the same time, Soviet international policy has generated a series of initiatives, ranging from proposals for global and regional security arrangements to proposals for radical reductions in strategic and theater-level nuclear systems and conventional forces. These and related changes have occurred against the backdrop of impending scientific-technical progress which may revolutionize the conduct of future war.

The shifting content, direction, and pace of real and perceived change have obscured some of the larger continuities which Marshal Akhromeev and the General Staff embody. Reference to these continuities can offer outside observers a useful perspective for categorizing, judging, and making sense of the very process of change itself. Akhromeev and his institutional brain represent a continuum spanning old and new ideas and joining older and younger generations of Soviet military

leadership. Marshal Akhromeev (b. 1923) was a junior officer during the Second World War, and his career and his General Staff associations link that central experience with the more diverse experiences and preoccupations of the current military and political leadership.

B. System and Method

Persistence in system and method are salient features of the Soviet General Staff's approach to constructing and promulgating a coherent vision of present and future military realities. A variety of mechanisms, ranging from membership by the officer corps in the CPSU to the pervasive presence of the Main Political Administration (MPA) of the Soviet Armed Forces, undergirds the development of a unified political-military outlook. At the same time, the General Staff stands at the apex of an elaborate network of military scientific-research institutes which constantly searches past and contemporary military experience to evolve a comprehensive method and vision to foresee the nature of future war. Traditionally, these institutes have drawn on the collective military wisdom residing at the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff and on civilian-military expertise residing within such diverse organizations as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU.

In the Gorbachev era, this apparatus displays new vitality in reaching out to its civilian academic counterparts in the

Institute of International Economics and Foreign Relations (IMEMO) and in the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, both of which are subordinate to an all-Union organization, the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In addition to reinforcing the network of civilian and military scientific-research institutes, this outreach is significant for at least two reasons. First, it pulls more firmly into the system genuine specialists on external and regional affairs, including the US, western Europe, Japan, and the Third World. Second, it draws on systems analysts (e.g., Afanas'ev, Gvishiani, and Zaslavskaja) for their analysis of both domestic and international issues. Aleksandr Yakovlev, member of the Politburo, is perhaps the most prominent representative of this trend. He has traveled and studied extensively in the US, and now enjoys sufficient status and position to place his first-hand knowledge directly at the disposal of the Politburo, Central Committee and Defense Council. The result is more sophisticated input into the political side of Soviet Military Doctrine. His views on capitalism and the West are no less hostile than the majority of his comrades. They are just more refined and better articulated.

The existence of the networks to which Yakovlev and others (e.g., the younger Gromyko, Arbatov, Kornienko, Trofimenko, and Dobrynin) belong enables the Soviet political and military leadership to draw upon a mixture of traditional and newer views, at a time when a new generation that has not directly experienced the Second World War attains official prominence. Thus, as a new

cycle of General-Staff trained officers reaches senior rank under the patronage of Defense Minister and General-of-the-Army D. T. Yazov, the views of a General Lieutenant A. A. Gal'kin (b. 1940) or a General Lieutenant V. A. Achalov (b. 1945) mix with, and enrich, those of such established authorities as Marshal N. V. Ogarkov (b. 1917), General-of-the-Army I. E. Shavrov (b. 1916), and Colonel General M. A. Gareev (b. 1922). Presumably, this generation also draws insight and fresh blood from younger officers who have held field command in Afghanistan. With Gorbachev's active support, Marshal Akhromeev's General Staff officers and their civilian counterparts collectively reflect and drive what the current leadership characterizes as "new thinking" in Moscow's international and military policies.

The findings and projections of various networks are expressed within a well-developed intellectual framework and according to a very specific methodology and vocabulary. The point of departure for the General Staff's understanding of the nature of future war (the whole object of Soviet military science) is the Soviet conception of voennaia doktrina ("military doctrine"), something quite different from prevailing Western views. For the US, JCS Pub 1 defines military doctrine as "fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives." In contrast, the Soviets, with only minor alteration since the 1920s, have conceived of Military Doctrine as "a nation's officially accepted system of scientifically founded views on the

nature of modern wars and the use of Armed Forces in them, and also on the requirements arising from these views regarding the country and its Armed Forces being made ready for war."¹ For the Soviets, Military Doctrine has two aspects: political (more recently "socio-political") and military-technical. In a conscious and on-going process, the CPSU, in consultation with appropriate civilian and military organs, determines the content of the first. The second lies within the professional competence of the General Staff. A common understanding of how the two components relate to one another under contemporary and likely future circumstances affords the Soviets a unified basis from which to articulate future military policies and requirements.

II. CURRENT INFLUENCES ON DOCTRINE

A. Changing Assumptions and Correlations

Since the 1920s, the Soviets have based their international policy and the political aspect of their Military Doctrine on perceptions of international class struggle and its impact on shifting correlations within global and regional political and military balances. These correlations embrace calculations not only of military forces, including raw force ratios, but also of

1. The origins of what the early Soviets termed "unified military doctrine" (edinaia voennaia doktrina) actually date to the period immediately following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, when Imperial Russian General Staff officers first advanced the proposition that Russia's armed forces required a single fighting concept based on a common understanding of the nature of contemporary war.

the relative strengths of competing socialist-capitalist coalitions in terms of their overall military, economic, and scientific-technical potential, political cohesion, and socio-political stability.

More recently, various initiatives on the part of the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev have demonstrated relatively greater maneuver and flexibility than under either Brezhnev or his successor caretaker regimes. These initiatives apparently flow from changing Soviet perceptions--evolving in large part from the networks mentioned above--of shifting correlations, which offer the prospect for greater political maneuver, and the diminished threat of nuclear war resulting from willful acts on the part of the two superpowers. What has not changed is the ideologically based assumption that the fundamental threat to world peace emanates from capitalist-inspired imperialism. What has changed is the perception, based on a more comprehensive understanding of the outside world, that the international environment simultaneously offers new opportunities, possibilities, and constraints. Constraints include recognition of the fact that military successes do not necessarily translate into long-term political gain. Also new and potentially threatening is the growing realization that military affairs stands on the threshold of a new age of high-technology weaponry that promises qualitative change in the ways that nations will wage future war.

Moscow's perception of shifting correlations is based on a set of increasingly refined and changing calculations related to

an entire range of global and regional issues, political and military-technical. At the superpower level, the Soviets believe that the fundamental US-USSR relationship has demonstrated more stability than events over the last decade of confrontation might have originally implied. The Soviets now appear to assume--in part also because of the Vietnam precedent--that US military intervention in Third World areas is limited by American unwillingness to become involved, persevere, or employ decisive force. While the Soviets perceive a resurgence of US unconventional warfare forces and a US willingness to support friendly regimes and oppose Soviet-backed movements in local wars, they also believe that active US intervention will remain confined to conflicts of short duration with limited objectives. At the same time, thanks largely to nuclear parity, the Soviets have concluded that systemic war between capitalism and socialism is neither likely nor imminent. In the unlikely event such a war does occur, it should remain conventional.

These observations have been reinforced by Soviet perceptions of structural constraints on the international conduct of developed capitalist and selected developing socialist nations. For example, the vulnerability of the US economy and the resurgence of the western European and Japanese economies underscore the advent of new political and economic relationships on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific.

In Europe, the prospect of NATO disagreement over defense-related issues coincides with a Soviet belief even before INF

that the US concept of extended deterrence lacked unqualified support either in the Federal Republic of Germany or among the smaller non-nuclear powers, including Belgium and the Netherlands. This concept links US central strategic systems with theater-level nuclear and conventional forces, and its continued relevance to the European situation will be the subject of intense political discussion after the withdrawal of nuclear-armed Pershing IIs and cruise missiles. Gorbachev's recent proposal for a European-wide regional security arrangement displays Soviet willingness to seize the political high ground in anticipation of post-INF debates.

In the Far East, the prospect of new power relationships and a nuclear-armed People's Republic of China taking an independent path to modernization and aligning itself more closely with the West has prompted Moscow to reach out to Beijing. Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in the summer of 1986 underscored the USSR's willingness to reassess its relationship with Asian nations in connection with a broad range of issues. The possibility of Soviet rapprochement with the PRC, though remote at the moment, could goad the Japanese also to seek closer relations with the USSR. Although the Soviets may want to inhibit the development of closer Sino-American relations, the mid-term Soviet analysis predicts a decline in the Chinese military threat, owing to domestic preoccupations. Over the long-term, the Soviets expect the PRC's military capabilities to increase as the Chinese

develop a better economic and technical infrastructure to support the fielding of modern military systems.

These and related realities and assumptions have prompted the Soviets to conclude that the international environment now affords more room for political maneuver. Although Soviet belief in socialism's growing strength remains an article of faith, Moscow's awareness of new possibilities results not so much from new-found strength as it does from a recognition of systemic factors constraining all international actors. These perceptions, combined with Gorbachev's energetic and assertive leadership, help account for the recent wide-ranging series of proposals in the international arena, ranging from schemes for global and regional security arrangements to a variety of arms control and disarmament measures. For Moscow, then, the good news implicit in these initiatives relates to prospects for increased leverage in superpower relations and in relations with the European states.

The major Soviet difficulty lies in calculations related to Third World regional conflicts. The Soviets are now playing down the role of wars of national liberation in such conflicts. Indeed, the Soviets now cite only forty remaining colonies, and the majority of these are small islands where the imperialist powers retain military bases. Only two potential wars of national liberation garner significant attention: South Africa and Puerto Rico. Although the Soviets still see East-West tensions (socialism versus imperialism) as the "central

contradiction of our times and the main source of war," they now recognize a much more complex international environment in the Third World, where north-south and south-south conflicts can also pose the threat of escalation to general war. In the Soviet categorization of war, a new type, "wars of liberated states of capitalist and socialist orientation," has displaced wars of national liberation as the dominant form of conflict in the Third World. The new category embraces Western attacks upon, and conflicts among such states.

Further, the Soviets recognize conflict stemming from a growing Western commitment to retain access to certain regions for strategic materials vital to developed, capitalist economies. For example, the Soviets assume a continuation of US efforts to protect access to resources in southern Africa. Consequently, the Soviets have concluded that the prospects for local wars and the concomitant risk of their escalation into systemic war have increased in almost every region of the globe. In most cases, such conflicts will result from imperialist actions. In a number of other conflicts, however, the Soviets emphasize that objective factors, including uneven development, ethnic hostilities, and religious fanaticism, provide sufficient cause for wars that relate only indirectly to the central conflict of capitalism versus socialism.

This increasingly complex analysis of Third World conflict has dampened some of the optimism of earlier Soviet views. Traditionally, the Soviet methodology of future war (regardless

of type) has emphasized a requirement to foresee three things: a war's social nature ("who is doing in whom?"), how will it begin, and what will be its consequences. While the questions have remained the same, the realities and implications of recent local wars have made them more difficult to predict. From the recent history of the Middle East and Southwest Asia, in particular, flow two Soviet realizations: that parties independent of both Moscow and Washington, including anti-capitalist, but not necessarily pro-socialist movements, and militant religious movements, often defy both prediction and control; and that local wars retain the capacity to produce superpower confrontation with associated risk of nuclear armageddon. While regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean may show great promise as areas in which revolutionary movements fighting local wars can be used to draw down the strength of capitalism, each has to be understood both on its own merits and within the larger framework of class struggle before the Soviets can predictably manipulate struggle and conflict for gain.

Afghanistan clearly illustrates this complexity. Evidence indicates that in 1979 the Soviets expected that a decisive military intervention in Kabul would assure Soviet political domination and eventually dragoon the countryside into acquiescence. Nine years later, the Soviets and their surrogates maintain only a tenuous hold on the capital and outlying strongholds, while the mujahedeen show little sign of giving up

their anti-Soviet jihad. While the Soviet Armed Forces have not been defeated, they have achieved only military stalemate.

There are alternatives, however, to either protracted conflict or complete withdrawal. The Soviets are pursuing a combination of at least four options, while retaining sufficient flexibility to shift emphasis among them. First, they are attempting to change the military content of the struggle through Afghanization. Second, they are striving to co-opt elements of the resistance to strengthen the pro-Soviet Afghan faction. Third, they are seeking to internationalize the war by carrying it via cross-border attacks and extensive terrorism into Pakistan. Finally, they are using the prospect of withdrawal to lure the mujahedeen into the open in anticipation of possibly escalating the war in a struggle for complete military victory.

Whatever policy the Soviets ultimately choose, it will likely reveal something of their more refined understanding of the Third World environment. It is a fluid and complex milieu that holds both peril and promise. Leverages are often difficult to find and impossible to hold, while outcomes and advantages fall short of the kind of solid, low-risk predictability the Soviets tend to favor.

B. Domestic Concerns and Scientific-Technical Revolution

Because Marxism-Leninism emphasizes the "unity of struggle of opposites," no external political-military correlations are complete without a comparable accounting of internal strengths

and weaknesses. While striving to protect gains and improve the security of the socialist commonwealth, the USSR must always guard against the inherently divisive forces of internal ethnic sentiment and East European nationalism. Although the Soviets will continue to seek success in these and related areas as they have in the past, what bothers Gorbachev and his military leaders, above all, are the twin problems of economic stagnation and technological backwardness. Since the 1930s, the Soviet centralized economy has demonstrated all the strengths and weaknesses of a command-oriented mobilization system. It responds to the grosser requirements of central planning but remains less sensitive to the more sophisticated needs of an information-based society. It also has difficulty matching pure research with applied engineering and modern production techniques. Thanks to the appearance of weaponry based on "new physical principles," including lasers, particle beams, microwaves, biogenetic technologies, and others, the Soviets realize that now, as never before, science has a direct role in military research and development. The sobering reality, however, is that the old-style Soviet command economy is not well-adapted for the next round of the arms race, in which the mass production and introduction of radically new weaponry will require a new technological base.

Thus, economic stagnation and lagging technology remain major concerns as the General Staff calculates future Soviet military potential. Without substantial capital input and a

"restructuring" to improve the rate of investment and its return, the economy will continue to flounder, thereby depriving the military of a larger slice out of an overall larger future economy. True, the nagging technological lag can be partially offset by overt and covert collection from foreign sources. These and other traditional approaches, however, do not satisfy fundamental requirements for growth in new sectors which will support massive research and development in scientific-technical areas crucial to a post-industrial nation's ability to wage future "high-tech" war. All this indicates probable shifts in the Soviet economy with a new set of emphases, altered investment priorities, and a very different relationship between pure science and production. Without the aid of fundamental economic restructuring, the Soviet General Staff will find itself standing half-naked on the threshold of a new era in which scientific-technical advances promise a qualitative breakthrough that will affect the nature and conduct of future war.

C. Precedents and Projections

In the aggregate, these changing calculations, which in only some respects resemble what US observers would term "net assessments," contribute to both the political and military-technical sides of Soviet Military Doctrine. The long context of Russian and Soviet military experience also permits the knowledgeable observer to cite precedents, consider analogies and make projections regarding the perspective of the Soviet General

Staff. On at least three previous occasions during the last century and a quarter, the Russian and Soviet military establishments have faced the need for technological modernization at the expense of traditional approaches. The first occurred under General D. A. Miliutin and Tsar Alexander II in the 1860s, when the Imperial Russian Army reorganized and re-equipped itself to accommodate the military imperatives of the industrial revolution. The second occurred under Marshal M. N. Tukhachevskii and I. V. Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s, when the Red Army restructured and re-equipped itself to accommodate the imperatives of massive mechanization. The third occurred under Marshal V. D. Sokolovskii and N. S. Khrushchev in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Soviet Armed Forces underwent significant alteration to accommodate the likelihood of nuclear war, a period which the Soviets have termed the "revolution in military affairs." Now, thanks to the advent of a new generation of military technology, the Soviet General Staff believes that it stands on the verge of another revolution in military affairs.²

Three conclusions are notable about the way that Russians and Soviets and their military elites have approached the need

2. Western observers sometimes overlook the Miliutin precedent to call mechanization the "first" military revolution. More recently, preoccupation with weapons based on "new physical principles" has caused the Soviets themselves to de-emphasize the computer revolution of the 1960s and 1970s in troop direction and automated decision-making processes. Depending upon what the historian counts and where he fixes origins, the current revolution might actually be the fifth since the 1860s ushered in the onset of war in the industrial era for Russia and the Soviet Union.

for radical military change. First, successive military elites (especially officers of the General Staff, referred to by Russians earlier in this century as genshtabisty) have not only perceived the need for change on their own, they have actively agitated for and supported the requirement for military reform. Second, within certain limits, Russian and Soviet military elites have also supported attendant "restructuring" programs and societal changes mandated by new military requirements. When these limits have been exceeded, the military has acted as a check on reform (e.g., Khrushchev's ouster in 1964). Nor did the Soviet officer corps either expect or benefit from the purges which followed Stalin's forced industrialization campaign. Finally, there has usually been a perception of the need for a "breathing space" (peredyshka), a period of calm and stability, during which needed changes could be implemented and permitted to bear fruit. As the experience of 1941 has indicated, the last thing any Soviet military leader wants is to be caught mid-stream by the onset of war during a sweeping reorganization and weapons modernization program.

The present situation offers still another analogy and at least one anomaly. As in the 1930s and 1950s, the current requirement for military restructuring occurs at a time when the General Staff benefits from shifting international and regional correlations. Anomaly stems from the way that General Staff thinkers have viewed the link between evolving technology and military modernization. Traditionally, the Soviets have favored

a solidly integrated methodology in which concept drives the development and fielding of technologies in a comprehensive approach to military problem solving. The conventional formula for the Soviet military has been "from military affairs to science, and from science to practical application." Now, however, Colonel V. M. Bondarenko, a leading specialist in cybernetics and troop control, emphasizes that the path is "from science to military affairs," an explicit recognition of the accelerated pace and course of scientific-technological change.

This probably means that the Soviets have conceded--at least for the near-term--that the pace of change has achieved a dynamic of its own, one that drags concept along in its wake. This had certainly been the case with the earlier "revolution in military affairs," when in the 1950s and 1960s the Soviets had plunged headlong into a nuclear-inspired radical transformation, significant aspects of which Colonel General Gareev, current Deputy Chief of the General Staff, publicly critiqued in 1984. Despite Gareev's cautionary note, the current view seems to be that today's rapidly changing military technologies may not be so easily yoked to organization and concept, and it is this realization that currently colors the General Staff's view of an incipient "second revolution" in military affairs. If precedent is any indication for assessments of current realities, the implications, course, and outcome of new technological applications are subjects of intense and hotly debated discussions within the General Staff.

From the General Staff's perspective, the prospect of an impending scientific-technical revolution looms particularly ominous for at least three reasons. First, it holds extensive and expensive implications for changed requirements in posture, organization, equipment, and force structure. Second, from a military-technical point of view, new weaponry, including advanced conventional munitions, lasers, particle beams, radio waves, and enhanced energy devices, when coupled with the possibility of space deployments, promises to make conventional war in many respects as lethal as nuclear war. Third, from a political point of view, the corresponding lethality of old nuclear weapons, and new, non-nuclear weapons may either erase or blur the line between the two. Therefore, despite the warning against overreaction explicit in General Gareev's critique of Soviet responses to the first revolution in military affairs, the General Staff is not viewing the advent of the new weaponry as simply part of a normal chain of progression.

D. Summary

The General Staff's vision of the various influences on the development of Soviet Military Doctrine has undergone substantial revision within the last decade. For various reasons, an altered and more sophisticated perception of the kinds and likelihood of imminent war has emerged, and that perception has been accompanied by the prospect of greater room for calculated Soviet political maneuver in a more dynamic international environment.

There is also the sobering realization that regional instabilities and new technologies hold promise and peril for the future of the socialist camp. The consolidation of a new Soviet political leadership more attuned to "new thinking" and the need for change in both domestic and international policies has reinforced this altered vision. With the spirit of "restructuring" permeating the political and military realms, it is the responsibility of the Soviet General Staff, having digested the doctrinal implications of change in the political sphere, to manage change in the military-technical sphere. Soviet approaches to the salient East-West military issues of the foreseeable future will reflect both aspects of Soviet Military Doctrine.

III. SOVIET POST-INF INITIATIVES

A. Strategic

The CPSU and the General Staff, through diplomacy and arms control will manage evolution to the military future. The existence of an integrated vision explicit in the Soviet concept of Military Doctrine makes it difficult to separate political and military initiatives. This is particularly true at the strategic level, where the General Staff has probably determined that substantial numerical cuts in the two superpowers' strategic nuclear arsenals are desirable, given the fact that the US has traditionally relied on strategic nuclear weaponry in place of

massive conventional forces to strike the Soviet homeland. Clearly, the magnitude of such cuts in future proposals will be shaped by changing--perhaps in a radical sense--Soviet perceptions of their own strategic targeting requirements and options, as well as by the vulnerability of friendly and enemy strike systems and military, economic, and leadership target categories. Soviet statements suggesting the prospect of "global conventional war" waged with advanced non-nuclear weapons are an additional key to understanding Soviet strategic nuclear arms reduction proposals and bear the closest scrutiny. Such proposals also play well to world opinion by reducing the perceived chance of war and satisfy political objectives with reference to the Western alliance system, the non-US members of which simultaneously and paradoxically worry about US hegemony and strategic decoupling.

More worrisome for Marshal Akhromeev is the military-technical side of the future strategic equation, in which the US Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) assumes a major part. Although the US bills SDI as a defensive measure, the Soviets perceive it as the entree into a multi-matrix defensive-offensive system which promises to accelerate the pace of the scientific-technical revolution and exact greater costs on the Soviet system.

In the event that SDI delivers on its promise, the Soviets would see a much higher correlation between defensive and offensive application than the US has thus far acknowledged. The

General Staff, on the basis of past experience with high-technology defensive systems (e.g., radar), would also argue that it is impossible to foresee completely either where a given technology will lead or how it will ultimately relate with other advanced technologies.

The Soviets also fear that SDI-associated technology will apply across the entire spectrum of conflict, not just in strategic matters. For this and other reasons, the Soviets will continue to struggle against SDI, but realistically count only on slowing its momentum to place the USSR in a better position to manage the pace of adaptation and the rate of development. The Soviet "floor" for any agreement in this arena is US adherence to strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty as it relates to testing and research and development.

Three additional and related considerations will influence the Soviet approach to arms control negotiations not only with reference to strategic concerns, but across the entire potential spectrum of conflict. First, the Soviets will strive to de-nuclearize future war to advance their own security interests and to make future armed conflict in any general war once again a realistic extension of "politics by other means." Any reductions in nuclear arsenals increase the likelihood that future war will be conventional. Second, the Soviets will seek to reduce the risk of military-operational and technological surprise. Third, they will attempt to limit the mix of high-low systems (rockets and air breathing) coupled with stealth technology that might

produce a breakthrough in either a partial or full deployment of SDI-associated technologies. The Soviets believe that these technologies will apply to theater-level war, and their concern over this probability also plays back to the General Staff's basic preoccupation with managing the pace of technological change to Soviet advantage.

B. Theater

The Soviet posture in theater-level discussions promises numerous initiatives. Politically, these initiatives will play on differences within the Western alliance system over such fundamental issues as the utility of extended deterrence and the re-emergence of traditional European apprehensions regarding US domination and uncertainty over decoupling. The Soviets intend to isolate the US by portraying it as a hegemonic power and to exaggerate differences within the alliance system. Besides political advantage, Soviet initiatives will seek to buy time (a "breathing space" necessary for perestroika) and serve as a means of managing (and perhaps obscuring) a fundamental restructuring of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe. The latter has already begun and will continue in connection with future proposals for sweeping mutual force reductions.

The Soviet concept of Military Doctrine will have a profound influence on the nature of theater initiatives and the course and content of subsequent negotiations and alterations of force structures and postures. In addition, the traditional General

Staff methodology governing the approach to theater-level war provides contextual framework and perspective, reference to which can aid outside observers in perceiving and understanding underlying pattern and rationale.

Historically, the Russian genshtabisty (General Staff officers) and their Soviet successors thoroughly studied and prepared (the process of izuchenie i podgotovka teatra) potential theaters of military operations in anticipation of future hostilities. The concept of specific theater always served to focus attention and energies. Study included extensive analysis of potential opposing military forces and rigorous assessment of geography, topography, demography, and political-institutional and economic infrastructures. An analysis of these factors produced an understanding of requirements. Preparation for war included actions ranging from actual military planning to the creation of command structures and the implementation of force structuring and training programs required to wage war in a given theater. The aggregate of actions linking strategic design with the actual conduct of operations, including tactical and logistical planning and execution, contributed to the evolving Soviet concept of operational art within the larger context of strategy and military art.

The Soviets have always insisted that Europe would be the decisive theater in any general war between socialism and capitalism. Over the last two decades, Soviet perceptions of the nature of future war in Europe have played an important role in

changing the General Staff's concept of key aspects of Soviet military art and organization. The Soviets have appreciated the impact of increased urbanization and reforestation on future operations. These circumstances, coupled with the appearance of new anti-armor technologies, more lethal and precise indirect fires, advanced armor characteristics, and enhanced intelligence-gathering capabilities, have altered traditional approaches to operational art, tactics, and force structuring. For the Soviets, new technologies and techniques, including reconnaissance-fire and reconnaissance-strike complexes, are only the tip of the looming larger scientific-technical iceberg. Collectively, these changes promise to alter the face of future battle, and, even more fundamentally, to challenge the traditional Clausewitzian manner in which General Staff officers have conceived of the interplay between the offensive and defensive in modern war, whereby defense predominated over the offense. Underlying these realizations is the prospect of domestic Soviet demographic changes, which are likely to produce a smaller military manpower pool.

These considerations have altered Soviet military art and organization and will continue to do so. The advent of improved technologies and means of command and control has already facilitated introduction of the Soviet conception of the theater-strategic operation (TSO) with its associated command structure (High Command of Forces in theater), logistical concepts and organization, and supporting naval, air, anti-air, and desant

operations. An increasingly dense and lethal European combat environment will result in still greater emphasis on traditional Soviet conceptions of all-arms (obshchevoiskovye) techniques and formations. The same influences underscore the increased criticalness of rapid maneuver through various mediums at the operational-strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The tyranny of time-distance calculations will reinforce traditional Soviet stress on surprise, maskirovka (deception), and the employment of effective covert mobilization and logistics measures. Together, these factors will require introduction of smaller, tailored, and more compact combat formations and units with automated command and control and greater speed, mobility, and firepower.

As the Soviet General Staff manages change, these considerations will require creation of a streamlined, more efficient active force structure which emphasizes the importance of tailored, functional units (corps and brigades) of all-arms composition, with a balanced (mechanized, armor, and air mobile) rather than an armor-heavy structure. Within a more streamlined force, the absolute number of combat vehicles, self-propelled-artillery, specialized vehicles, and helicopters will likely increase, while quantities of traditional heavy weaponry may in fact decrease.

To man the force, the Soviets may place greater emphasis on an expandable cadre system by extending its application among forward-deployed forces. Such a departure has both immediate

(the 1940s) and more remote (the 1910s) precedents. The new force structure would be suited to the conduct of a war characterized by surprise, rapid maneuver, and improved sustainment.

The potential combat power of such a system could be increased under contemporary conditions by providing for improved forward stockpiling of munitions, equipment, and military stores. At the same time, an improved logistical system and massive use of heavy equipment transporters could provide for a renewed assault on traditional problems of mobilization, movement, and sustainment, in particular under covert circumstances before or during the initial period of war. The Afghanistan experience, however, has indicated that the Soviets face substantial training challenges before reserves could be made combat-ready, the more so in a high-technology European environment. The Soviets will have to remedy this problem by revitalizing pre-military and post-active duty training programs.

With these and similar departures already either in partial effect or on the drawing boards, the General Staff will approach theater-level post-INF arms control and mutual confidence-building discussions. In particular, should the US and the USSR become involved in multilateral doctrinal talks, the comparatively neglected area of conventional warfighting capabilities will suddenly assume great significance. In a post-INF world, conventional forces will automatically take on greater weight in theater-level calculations of correlation of forces.

At the same time, these discussions will occur at just the time when conventional Warsaw Pact and NATO forces themselves are undergoing radical change, based on new technologies, postures, force structures, and doctrines. For both East and West, operational maneuver groups (OMGs), forward detachments, reconnaissance-strike and reconnaissance-fire complexes, Airland Battle, and Follow-On Forces Attack are constituent parts of this process and will become grist for the negotiating mill.

If the US and NATO choose to enter doctrinal negotiations with the Soviets, asymmetries in force structures and doctrinal outlooks will make talks between military leaders both difficult and useful as exercises in mutual education. The issue of asymmetry will begin with definition of the term "military doctrine." The Western definition reflects its military-intellectual heritage and socio-political realities, including subordination of the military to civilian authority and the apolitical nature of the military. In contrast, the Soviet definition reflects the hegemony of the CPSU, its penetration of the military, and the evolution of a common military-political effort. From the Soviet point of view, the watchwords will be "sufficiency" in force structure and "defensiveness" in military doctrine.

From the beginning of discussions, the Soviets will play on doctrinal differences which exist among the NATO alliance partners and even within the armed forces of the individual member states. In contrast, the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact

allies will form a united front. Their views will reflect the rigor, structure, and lexicon of Soviet military science. The Soviets will focus on differences within NATO and appeal to Western public opinion. First, the Soviets will identify key features of alliance and member state doctrines as "offensive" and "war threatening." Second, the Soviets will stress the benefits which can be derived from mutual adjustments in doctrine (e.g., reduced defense burdens and increased security). Their intent will be to erode NATO resolve in a classic indirect approach that reaches outside formal negotiations to appeal directly to Western public opinion.

More importantly, in keeping with the General Staff's intent to denuclearize future war, doctrinal discussions will provide a forum for the Soviets to press for the "third zero," that is, the reduction or abolition of short range nuclear weapons.³ The Soviets will argue that short range nuclear weapons are inherently destabilizing because, in the event that actual hostilities take a bad turn, the temptation would be to use them. The Soviets will also argue that, because nuclear weapons of limited range cannot be used defensively without causing unacceptable damage to the homelands of alliance members, the weapons themselves must therefore be inherently offensive in nature, designed to blast holes through Soviet tactical defenses. Under the rubric of "defensiveness," the Soviets will argue

3. "First" and "second" zeroes referred to initiatives for abolition of strategic and intermediate range nuclear weapons.

forcefully for the "third zero," and their arguments will play well to select segments of popular opinion, not only in the Federal Republic of Germany but also among other nuclear "have not" members of the alliance.

During the course of doctrinal discussions, the Soviets will also focus on issues of military art directly related to long-standing concerns of the General Staff, including the scope, nature, and decisiveness of the initial period of war; operational art; the role of maskirovka in the conduct of operations; contemporary all-arms combat; the nature of troop control; and the role of war games, command post exercises, and maneuvers in the development of military art.

The Soviets will display the same set of concerns in negotiations regarding conventional force reductions in Europe. With all the advantages that an integrated vision of Military Doctrine implies, the General Staff will make its force felt in negotiations with specific initiatives to complement INF and "third zero." The General Staff has already begun to restructure and streamline units deployed in Europe and plans to accelerate that process. The new structures could overtly or covertly incorporate corps and brigades or could evolve to a pure corps structure. Adoption of this radically different structure will permit the Soviets to call for corresponding reductions in NATO conventional forces. Surprisingly for many Western observers, the Soviets are likely to offer to remove many armored and some traditional artillery formations from their force structure.

thereby linking force modernization and arms control processes. On the surface, these and similar initiatives will play well to Western governments and populations which are apprehensive about massed Soviet armor and which seek more defense at lower cost. The same initiatives will also complement the General Staff's coherent and rational approach to force modernization in anticipation of fashioning a fully integrated force with enhanced combat capabilities for the conduct of future war.

Given the importance of time-distance factors in any future European war involving the US and the USSR, the Soviets will likely attempt to limit US capability for timely reinforcement on the continent. Should such an initiative fail, the Soviets would probably revert to proposals for reciprocal withdrawals from Europe, which, given geography and at least partial Soviet reversion to some form of a cadre mobilization system, would place time-distance advantage on Moscow's side. Meanwhile, these initiatives would be put forward in an atmosphere of Western budgetary constraints and NATO doctrinal diversity and in a forum designed to play on susceptible Western public opinion, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In an effort to retain political momentum, the Soviets will propose concessions and advance initiatives embracing a number of measures ranging from intrusive inspections to advocacy of nuclear-free zones and a moratorium on nuclear testing. These proposals are part of a political effort to build a web of agreements and assumptions with the West which will limit the

pace of technological innovation in a number of areas relating to strategic offensive, strategic defensive, theater-nuclear, and conventional emerging-technology weapons systems and concepts. From the perspective of the General Staff, arms control proposals will remain an integral part of the struggle for the military-technological initiative, and they will come at a time when the pace of technological development makes such a course appear prudent and advantageous in approaching the military future.

6. Local Wars

The Soviets define a local war as one involving a relatively small number of countries and a limited geographic area. Three decades of Soviet involvement in local wars have featured support ranging from limited political, economic, and arms assistance efforts, to extensive, protracted military aid programs, the introduction and support of surrogate forces, joint efforts with other socialist states, and the direct employment of Soviet military forces. As a consequence of programs begun in the early 1960s and continuing apace, the USSR will enter the 1990s with a military-technical base and associated employment concepts that afford General Staff planners a broad range of options for influencing the course of Third World conflicts with military means. Soviet attention focuses on four major areas: strategic mobility; a materiel-technical base specifically tailored to support Third World clients; unconventional warfare forces and techniques; and Soviet forces with direct intervention potential.

Long-range airlift and sealift, which underlie Soviet power projection capabilities at all levels of conflict, will continue to receive substantial resources. This capability, which so impressed Western observers of local wars throughout the 1970s, will be supplemented by new long-range aircraft and ships. Technology such as that embodied in the fuel-efficient "wing-in-ground" concept will make possible rapid long-range land or sea movement of heavy military cargoes, thus further enhancing Soviet strategic mobility.

Large central reserves of armor, artillery, air defense, and engineer equipment, serve to provide resources for future military assistance in distant theaters. These strategic reserve stocks, formed largely as a by-product of past and current Soviet force modernization programs, exceed the requirements of current maneuver and support units. Thus, surge resupply efforts of the type undertaken in the Middle East, Angola, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, along with more measured, clandestine arms assistance programs, only minimally reduce operational inventories of Soviet forces designated for operations in key continental theaters facing Europe, Southwest Asia, and the Far East.

Despite Soviet recognition that local wars of the 1990s may assume extraordinary levels of intensity, the General Staff ascribes increased significance to unconventional forces. Soviet concerns for the immediate future will stress the continuing importance of unconventional warfare forces to support insurgency/counter-insurgency operations, clandestine resupply

and support techniques, and address other issues associated with "low intensity conflict." Perceived opportunities and vulnerabilities in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, together with the Afghanistan experience, have prompted the Soviets to examine such issues as low-level drop and infiltration techniques, the employment of gliders and ultralight aircraft, and the optimum means of nurturing small insurgencies as they develop from a few irregular detachments into conventional armed forces. New Soviet approaches in this regard reflect a clear General Staff interest in providing low-visibility/low-risk military support to movements and regimes whose successes may further Soviet foreign policy goals.

Direct Soviet military intervention in local wars will remain the least likely form of Soviet military involvement in Third World conflicts. Nevertheless, the USSR will continue to modernize its large, strategically mobile forces with the potential of moving to, and fighting in, a variety of local war arenas. The following factors promise to keep the prospect of Soviet intervention a major planning consideration for the West: a large, multi-division airborne force now fully mechanized and equipped with light armor; a relatively small, highly skilled amphibious force backed by amphibious-trained motorized rifle units; a surface navy with a growing fixed-wing and helicopter aviation force that may in the 1990s reduce long-standing shortfalls in tactical air support beyond the Soviet periphery; and strategic transport resources composed of both military and

large civil components. At a minimum, precedent and explicit Soviet statements point to the future coercive use of strategically mobile forces as a means of constraining Western actions abroad, with the potential of direct Soviet involvement more feasible in at least some areas.

Assessments of future Soviet resource investments, planning, and preparations for the support of local wars need to be tempered by the reality of Soviet military performance in the Third World and by obvious difficulties the USSR has experienced in achieving and maintaining lasting successes. The CPSU and the General Staff perceive that the next decade promises to be a far more complex period in terms of Third World opportunities and limitations. Therefore, the employment of military means--certain to be a major component of future Soviet foreign policy initiatives in the developing world--will likely manifest itself most often in open arms assistance and military advisory programs of varying intensity, as well as in increasingly active covert support of all types. These are the military levers which Soviet General Staff planners believe will be best suited for exploiting whatever political opportunities the Soviets may perceive in the Third World.

D. Conclusion

Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov (1882-1945), the father of the modern Soviet General Staff and himself a product of the Imperial Russian General Staff system, admonished latter-day counterparts

of the Old Regime genshtabisty "to be more than you seem." Perhaps his warning against the dangers inherent in elitism accounts for the relatively low profile that officers of the contemporary General Staff maintain while acting as the inheritors of a long and often illustrious planning and operational tradition. However, given the central importance of the General Staff in modern Soviet military development, neither apparent institutional modesty nor Western neglect can obscure the role that Marshal Akhromeev and the "brain" of the Soviet Armed Forces play and will continue to play in orchestrating a transition to the Soviet military future.

Analysis of the General Staff's methods and concerns reveals that the Soviet military feels itself confronted by major and possibly radical changes in the political and military-technological components of Soviet Military Doctrine. In relation to the political aspect, the General Staff must deal with the implications of a more complex international environment affecting superpower relations and the role of other nations, in the case of the latter with special regard to the causes, nature, and outcome of local wars. In relation to the military-technical aspect, the implications of change are even more apparent: weapons based on "new physical principles" are calling into question traditional approaches to tactics, operational art, and strategy. At the same time, the transition to such new weapons systems will mandate adjustments in the national economy and raise significant issues of force structuring, posture,

mobilization, and readiness, all of which, in turn, will assume growing significance in the arms control and disarmament process.

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